(c) Oil Marketing Companies have not come across any instance of deliberate delay in LPG refill supply to the customers in Trichur.

**Availability of LPG connections in Barak valley in Assam**

1646. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in most States in the country, the L.P.G. connections are readily available on demand except in Barak valley of Assam where there is a long wait-list of L.P.G. connections and the people have to wait for years together for release of L.P.G. connections;

(b) if so, the steps Govemment propose to take to make L.P.G. available easily to the people of Barak valley in Assam; and

(c) by when the situation is likely to be eased in Barak valley in Assam?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (c) Govemment had given direction to Oil Marketing Companies to clear the entire wait-list in North-Eastern States including Barak valley of Assam. However, due to logistics problem and very high demand for new comiections some wait list has generated over last ' few months. Efforts are on to liquidate the same as early as possible.

**Shortage in supply of LPG in Kerala**

1647. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any shortage of supply of LPG is prevailing in Kerala;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for delay in supplying the LPG to the consumers in Kerala by the LPG agencies; and

(d) whether Government will take steps to avoid the delay in LPG distribution in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) to (d) Backlog of LPG has been reported in the State of Kerala recently due to temporary bulk LPG constraints.

Oil companies have been advised to operate LPG supply bases/ bottling plants inextended hours/holidays so as to clear the existing backlog expeditiously.

**Depriving royalty rate to Gujarat**

1648. SHRI BRAHMAKUMAR BHATT: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to link the price of crude oil to the international FOB price for the post March 1998 period;

(b) the reasons for depriving of the royalty rate to the Govemment of Gujarat; and

(c) if not, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI E. PONNUSWAMY): (a) The price of crude oil payable to ONGC/OIL has been linked to FOB price of imported crude oil w.e.f. 01.04.98. ONGC/OIL are being paid pre-announced percentage of weighted average of FOB price of actual imports of crude oil subject to floor benchmark basic price of Rs, 1919/MT, which was the provisional basic price as on 31.03.98. The pre-announced percentages are as follows:

| Year | % age |
|---|---|
| 1998-1999 | 75 |
| 1999-2000 | 77.5 |
| 2000-2001 | 80 |
| 2001-2002 | 82.5 |

The price of crude oil is fixed on monthly basis.

(b) and (c) A new scheme of royalty from 1.4.98 is being formulated and will be put in place shortly. In the meantime, royalty on crude oil is being paid to Central and State Government, including Gujarat State, provisionally.